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RUEHOU/AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU PRIORITY 0045
RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS PRIORITY 8274
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 002398

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ENERGY FOR CAROLYN GAY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/13/2017

TAGS: [KDEM](#) [MASS](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: DEPUTY SECRETARY'S MEETING AT MINISTRY OF DEFENSE

Classified By: CDA Lisa Piascik for reasons 1.4. (b & d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: During a November 12, 2007 meeting at the Ministry of Defense, Deputy Secretary of State Negroponte and Minister of Defense Alhaji Mahmud Yayale Ahmed affirmed common goals on defense- and peacekeeping-related matters. Minister Ahmed indicated that the GON was moving forward on providing a battalion for the African Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and his staff provided an update on the formation of the ECOWAS Stand-by Force (ESF). He also described the GON's plan for resolving the crisis in the Niger Delta, and he praised US/Nigerian cooperation on counterterrorism while pleading for, in his view, the need for a more balanced U.S. assessment of the causes of extremism. Minister Ahmed closed the meeting with a list of specific GON needs which he hoped the USG could meet. END SUMMARY.

Nigeria and Peacekeeping

¶2. (C) Minister Ahmed lauded the USG's commitments to peace, democracy, and combating HIV/AIDS, and praised American society as a model of successful pluralism and multiculturalism. The Deputy Secretary thanked Nigeria for its leadership on Darfur peacekeeping, and noted that President Yar'Adua's upcoming meeting with Sudanese President Bashir could help end the Sudanese Government's interference with international peacekeeping efforts. The Deputy Secretary also encouraged Nigeria to provide a battalion for

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Somalia, and said President Yar'Adua's plan to encourage an African Union regional stand-by forces was a good one. In response, Chief of Defense Staff General Azazi responded that the ESF is already in the process of being trained, and that it consists of two battalions, with Nigeria spearheading the Eastern one while Senegal is the backbone of the Western Battalion. ECOWAS hopes the ESF will be deployment-ready by ¶2010. In response to his plea for training and equipment for both the ESF and Nigerian PKO forces, A/S Frazer held up USG assistance to Uganda and Burundi as a model for possible further cooperation between the United States and Nigeria.

The Troubled Niger Delta

¶3. (C) Minister Ahmed outlined three aspects of President Yar'Adua's plan for resolving Niger Delta conflict. Politically, the GON has made the Delta a core priority receiving commensurate diplomatic, military, and financial support. Militarily, he claimed, the Joint Task Force was using the least possible amount of force, respecting humanitarian concerns while still being effective on the ground. The military is also taking pains to maintain open lines of communication with indigenous communities, especially the Ijaw. Finally, the government would use these political and military efforts to create space to address the "primordial" cause of the troubles: decades of underdevelopment in the Delta. The GON was determined to make sure that development funds would actually be used for that purpose and not siphoned away by corrupt officials.

Counterterrorism

¶4. (C) The Deputy Secretary affirmed the U.S. desire to deepen its counterterrorism cooperation with Nigeria, noting the vast lawless spaces within the borders of its northern neighbors and the potential for trouble from the Maghreb. The Minister responded by calling for the U.S. and Nigeria to "join hands and forces" to fight terrorism, and asked the U.S. to remember that the roots of terrorism are many, and require an approach addressing education and development as well as law enforcement. He also said past U.S. and British estimates of the terrorism threat in Nigeria had proved exaggerated, and asked us not to overrate the threat (recent arrests of alleged Al-Qaida militants in northern cities notwithstanding). Finally, he pleaded for U.S. aid to

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restore armories, provide information technology, refurbish military hospitals in Kaduna and Lagos, and train more officers, noting that "when the U.S. trains a responsible Nigerian, it is training Africa."

¶5. (SBU) Participants:

U.S.
The Deputy Secretary
A/S Frazer
CDA Lisa Piascik
Gustavo Delgado, D Staff
Ted Wittenstein, D Staff
Defense Attaché Colonel Peter Aubrey
Office of Defense Cooperation Lt. Col Luis Perozo
Geoffrey Martineau, Embassy Notetaker

Nigeria
Minister of Defense Alhaji Mahmud Yayale Ahmed
Minister of State for Defense Fedelia Njeze
Permanent Secretary for Defense Haruna Sanussi
Chief of Defense Staff Owoye Andrew Azazi
Chief of Air Staff Paul Dike
Brig. Gen. Igah (from Chief of Army Staff office)
Major Gen. Said (Head of Defense Intelligence)

¶6. (U) The Deputy Secretary's staff has cleared this message.
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